

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Lenoard Mitchard on November 18, 2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

1. (currently amended) A powder metallurgically manufactured corrosion resistant steel material which is an alloy of the following composition in % by weight:

max 0.12 C

0.5-1.5 N

12-18 Cr

max 0.5 Mn

max 0.5 Ni

1.5 (Mo + W/2)

~~min 0.3 Nb~~ 0.3-1.0 Nb

max 1.5 (V + Nb/2 + Ti)

0.1-0.5 Si

from traces and up to max 2.0 Co

from traces and up to max 0.1 S

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balance iron and incidental impurities

and wherein the relation between nitrogen and carbon lies in the range of 4:1-75:1.

10. (canceled).

30. (currently amended) A steel material according to ~~claim 14~~ claim 2, wherein it has been hardened by austenitizing at 1100-1150°C, deep cooled at -80 – -200°C, and thereafter tempered at a temperature of 460-500°C.

33. (currently amended) A knife or tool of steel material, wherein the steel material is the one defined in claim [[16]] 1.

34. (currently amended) A machine knife or manual knife of steel material, wherein the steel material is the one defined in claim [[16]] 1.

35. (currently amended) A plastic moulding tool or plastic injection screw of steel material, wherein the steel material is the one defined in claim [[16]] 1.

36. (currently amended) A food and beverage packaging, paper based laminated product cutting tool of steel material, wherein the steel material is the one defined in claim [[16]] 1.

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37. (currently amended) A ball bearing of steel material, wherein the steel material is the one defined in claim [[16]] 1.

38. (canceled).

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art of record do not teach a steel with the composition as defined in amended claim 1, wherein the steel contains nitrogen and carbon in a ratio of 4:1-75:1. The primary reference to Stein et al. (DE 42 12 966 A1) teaches a carbon to nitrogen ratio of 0.4-0.8 (abstract), which when converted to nitrogen:carbon is 2.5:1-1.25:1, which is lower than the claimed range.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Examiner-Initiated Interview

Applicant agreed to incorporate claim 10 into claim 1 to avoid the issue of new matter with regard to the Nb content and to incorporate claim 38 into claim 1 to put the substance of the claim in condition for allowance. Applicant was informed that claim 11 should be made dependent on claim 2 to avoid broadening claim 2, thereby

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necessitating a rejection under the second paragraph 35 U.S.C. 112. Claims 33-37 were made dependent on the allowable independent claim 1, as claim 16 is a canceled claim.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vanessa Velasquez whose telephone number is 571-270-3587. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-6:00 PM ET.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King, can be reached at 571-272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Examiner, Art Unit 1793

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Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793